Roger Kutzner's Role in Preserving the Small House

Handwritten by: Roger Kutzner – Livingston County Historical Society Board member

Transcribed by: Dale C. Maley – President of Livingston County Historical Society

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The Albert Cashier house was last used as a chicken house and it was very deteriorated. It was scheduled to be burned down by the Saunemin Fire Department. It was saved and moved to the 4-H Park in Pontiac. The house was restored and opened for tours.

Saunemin then wanted their heritage back and it was moved to from Pontiac to Saunemin. It sat in Saunemin and started the deterioration process. An organization agreed to take the house and display it. The organization told the Saunemin people the roof had to be removed in order to transport it. The roof was removed, but the organization changed its mind and did not take the house. The house then sat in Saunemin with the four walls standing and no rafters or roof. The weather could easily enter the house and deteriorate it further.

The house was again scheduled to be burned down by the Saunemin Fire Department. Betty Estes, a tourism director from Pontiac, saved the house a second time. It was moved to a fenced in storage location in Pontiac. Attempts were made to get State of Illinois grants to restore the house, but the house was not sitting on the lot it was built on.

Now, not only the roof was missing, but the trailer it was setting on was too short and one end of the house hung over the end of the trailer. This caused the overhanging portion to twist. People complained the house looked terrible because it was missing the roof, boards were missing, and it was not painted.

Roger Kutzner, on behalf of the Livingston County Historical Society and the Pontiac Tourism Department, climbed over the fence on a Sunday morning. The boards on the house had round nails, which indicated it had

been modified after Albert Cashier died. Roger took some old boards that came from his grandmother's house and applied one coat of lindseed oil before he installed them on the house. On the outside of the house, Roger first applied a coat of linseed oil. He then applied a 2nd coat of half linseed oil and half oil based paint. Roger had to leave one spot bare because of wasps coming from a nest in the house! Roger recounted the 2 by 4 wood uprights for the house were always covered and in good shape.

The town of Saunemin then decided they wanted the house back and they spent $3,000 to move it from Pontiac to Saunemin. They basically built a new cabin in Saunemin and utilized only the door frame and window frames from the original house. The cabin was saved twice from being burned by the Fire Department and survived two relocations to Pontiac.